

# TOWN OF HARVARD

## Finance Committee

### Minutes

**Meeting Date:** Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011

**Meeting Place:** Town Hall

**Members Present:** Bob Thurston, Heidi Frank, Steve Colwell, Collyn Bradley, Lori Granville, George McKenna, Marie Fagan

**Others Present:** Tim Bragan-Town Administrator

**Meeting Time:** 9:07 am

**Adjournment Time:** 11:53 am

### Discussion and Actions

- Bob Thurston opened the meeting at 9:07 am
- Minutes from 01/19/11 meeting reviewed and approved.
- Library present to discuss budget:  
Their budget not identical to just meeting the MAR because they were trying to stay in line with what we asked ie. following the steps. Noted that MAR almost completely flat from last year to this year.  
The unspent funds are due to one employee retiring and three leaving for fulltime work elsewhere. This is not repeatable.  
They adjusted expense columns down slightly and met steps keeping budget level at \$516,339.  
Library fines may be raised. They are considering this and are talking with neighboring towns to see if they are in line with similar amounts. Their new email system of late fees is working which is bringing in less money in fines.  
They used their state aid last year for the purchase of three new computers and miscellaneous building repairs. They already received \$3100.00 in state aid and expect another similar payment for the year. They are using Library Trust Fund for roof repairs to the slate of the older building.  
Volunteer usage went very well. They were used weekly and for special projects. This helped with Friday opening.  
They are continuing the Book Fund and hope to offset Materials costs to Personnel line. This has to be an article at Town Meeting to affect this year's budget.  
To just meet MAR at \$511,517.00, the difference from their budget is \$4822.00. Plan to look at outside funds. Maintain Friday hours and possibly close Tues. evenings.
- COA present to discuss budget:  
There were positive comments made on their 5 year plan based on a new Senior Center and their vision of what this could bring, and what kind of a budget would be needed.

Marie mentions that a new Senior Center could be a source of revenue with those surrounding towns who may not have one. Boxborough currently does not.

Bob would like to see population increases put into their 5 year budget.

Extra personnel hours are currently funded by increased fees. Has participation reduced because of this? They feel that it has little impact ATT.

George asked about numbers/percentages: currently there are 435 active participants in town. 65 to 75 of these are cases, and roughly 75% of these folks use The Hildreth House. A typical event can have anywhere from 10 to 20 people in attendance.

- Dispatch is used for making appointments for MART. The town budgets for 27 of the 40 hrs, and COA budgets 13 of the 40 hrs. Dispatch is physically located at the Town Hall. COA would like to have this person move up to their location. When asked why, they feel that it would be more efficient for them and “makes sense”. Bob states that it is not efficient and cost effective for the overall town. They will ask for this to be looked into next year.

- Board of Health member Jack Sparro present to discuss budget:

We would like to see their budget adjusted to just steps and columns. Linda hired b/n Grade step 1 and 3. Tim will look into this and meet with Jack on Tues.

There will be new state regulations on the transfer station and they are being put under all local Boards of Health. Jack and Rich Nota are working together on this to try and lessen the burden on Board of Health.

Nashoba Health Services has been level and now a 5% increase. Jacks says that this depends on the number of communities they have/bring in, which absorbs some of this cost. FY2012 sounds realistic but beyond that, they don't know. Can Ira give us a better idea on this prediction?

Emergency Management from Worcester had given them \$300.00 for their office supplies line. This partly explains for the large increase in this line. We are asking for this line to increase more reasonably—possibly by \$300.00. Bob mentioned that this \$300 Grant from Emergency Management should have been an offset item. Tim will find out what Purchased Services line was spent on.

- Cemetery member Jack Sparro present to discuss budget:

Supplies line—why used every other year?

5 yr plan Purchased Services line with tree trimming—can this be done through Perpetual Care account? This was traditionally paid for out of Perpetual Care.

Sale of lots last year roughly \$12,000. 25% goes to Perpetual Care account which currently has \$54,000. 75% used to help buy more land which goes into Sale of Lots and Graves account.

Security system is a large Purchased Services item. This is now malfunctioning. Cemetery is looking into turning off electricity to the building and will cancel security service. There is no longer a tractor to protect.

We are asking them to bring their budget closer to where they spend (around \$2,000). Up until 2002, \$7,000.00 moved from Perpetual Care account to Town Budget. Why no longer? We may try to have Bruce in next week to discuss this.

### **Questions for Schools:**

- Supt./Central Office
  - 1.) What will the financial impact be for the change in the superintendent position? We are hoping to see a reduction financially, and possibly sharing this responsibility with another town. Is this actively being pursued?
  - 2.) Why the increase in the Regular Transport line? Is this due to a new contract?
- School Maintenance
  - 1.) You have a reduction of cost for electricity and fuel. Do these reflect what savings have already been made with energy conservation, or do you expect to see further reduction?
- Harvard Elementary
  - 1.) There is an addition of an Associate Principal for FY12. Please discuss this position to us in detail. What is the benefit with this added position vs. added cost?
  - 2.) Why the increase in the Substitutes Salary line by 25% for FY12?
  - 3.) There is an elimination of a fifth grade teacher. Will this teacher be shifted to another grade?
- Bromfield School
  - 1.) The Media/Library Coordinator Salary line shows a significant increase. Why the increase?
- Special Education
  - 1.) Why the reduction in the HES Learning Assistant line?
  - 2.) Why the increase in Home Instruction Line?
  - 3.) We hold \$150,000 in the Reserve Fund for this budget. Is this still a realistic number?
- Technology
  - 1.) Do the positive consequences of having redundant broadband outweigh the added cost? What has been the history of our current internet access?
  
- Meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM